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ABSTRACT

Designed as the first in a proposed set of three documents to be used to review elementary school programs in California, this guide describes the quality criteria used to judge program effectiveness for students. Criteria for a quality school program are provided in 13 areas: reading; written language; school effectiveness; special needs; oral language; mathematics; science; history-social science; visual and performing arts; learning environment; staff development; leadership; and planning, implementing, and evaluating the school program. The focus of each of the 13 criteria is described, and specific ways of meeting each criteria are listed. (HOD)

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ED269160

# Elementary School Program Quality Criteria

CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Bill Honig—Superintendent of Public Instruction
Sacramento, 1985

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ELEMENTARY

# Elementary School Program Quality Criteria

Prepared under the direction of the
Office of School Improvement
California State Department of Education

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# PREFACE

The Elementary School Program Quality Criteria is the first in a proposed set of three program review documents. The Quality Criteria and the companion documents, Handbook for Conducting an Elementary Program Review and the set of State Department K-8 curriculum guides, frameworks, and handbooks, have been designed to be used either separately or together. The program review documents are described as follows:

1. The Elementary School Program Quality Criteria--the quality criteria used to judge the effectiveness of the program for students

2. Handbook for Conducting an Elementary Program Review--the procedures and process for conducting a formal review and self-study

3. State Department of Education K-8 curriculum guides, frameworks, and handbooks--resources used by team and school staff during the review process

The Elementary School Program Quality Criteria includes quality criteria that describe a high-quality school in 13 areas:

| | |
|---|---|
| Reading | Schoolwide Effectiveness |
| Written Language | Special Needs |
| Oral Language | Learning Environment |
| Mathematics | Staff Development |
| Science | Leadership |
| History-Social Science | Planning, Implementing, and |
| Visual and Performing Arts | Evaluating the School Program |

Each criterion consists of a narrative statement portraying the central features of high quality. This statement is followed by a series of concrete descriptions indicative of this quality.

The document, Handbook for Conducting an Elementary Program Review, provides a complete discussion of the process and procedures of program review and assists school staff and parents in conducting a self-study as well as preparing for a formal review.

Finally, the last set of materials will serve as resources available to assist curriculum planners, school leaders, and reviewers in program improvement efforts.

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Program review plays an important part in realizing excellence in our schools. The review is a time for school staff members to step back from the press of day-to-day responsibilities to observe and discuss the effectiveness of their program. Such self-observation and discussion should occur before, during, and after the visit of the trained team from outside the school. The immediate benefits of basing program review on a foundation of self-review are the decisions and plans to make specific improvements in the school curriculum and instruction. The ultimate benefit is improvement in student learning.

This guide is designed to serve as the basis for both the visiting review team's and staff's reviewing of the school. The standards of quality contained in this guide are premised on two tenets--what makes an effective school and what is an educated person. Both beliefs grow from traditions of public schooling in American democracy. These ideas have been refined by recent experiences and research in efforts to improve schools.

What are the characteristics of an effective school? The Task Force on Standards for Effective Schools has identified sixteen factors it believes are found most often in California schools with effective instructional programs:

- Academic focus
- Rigorous content
- A safe and orderly environment
- Coordinated curriculum
- Maximum use of time
- Regular homework
- Opportunities for student responsibility and involvement
- Structured staff development
- Teacher-directed instruction
- Variety of teaching strategies
- High standards and expectations
- Regular assessment
- Instructional leadership
- Widespread recognition
- Home-school cooperation and support
- Sense of community

What should students be like as they emerge from elementary school on their way to becoming well-educated adults? Students should have a solid foundation in three kinds of learning: skills, knowledge, and values. A solid foundation of skills includes both the rudimentary skills, such as a comprehension of number facts in mathematics, and the higher level skills, including learning how to formulate and solve problems, how to analyze and interpret information, how to draw inferences, how to evaluate complex situations, how to think critically, how to express thoughts logically and clearly in written and oral form, and how to form independent judgments. The knowledge students acquire should have a clear academic focus, building on a base of oral language, reading, writing, and mathematics skills. Students should have extensive experience with literature, science, history, social sciences, visual and performing arts, physical education, and health. Finally, students should understand the values that are the cornerstone of our democracy. They should develop a basic sense of civic responsibility and the beliefs that form the ethical and moral bonds of our society.

To give students this foundation, the school must plan and carry out a quality curriculum. The core of this curriculum should be clearly defined, and instructional materials, instruction, and assessment should be aligned so that every student is guaranteed instruction in an agreed on balance of skills, knowledge, and values. Grade-level expectations should be established for readings in literature, social science, history, and science; for quantity and quality of writing assignments; for field and laboratory experiences in science; for homework assignments, both as independent practice and long-term projects that extend and deepen knowledge; and for oral presentations and discussion. These rich and active learning experiences should encompass the major skills, knowledge, and values of the elementary curriculum. Alignment of instructional materials, assessment, learning activities, and instruction with clear curricular goals is a major factor in school effectiveness.

Students with special needs also need this solid foundation of learning. Services designed for meeting special needs of educationally disadvantaged, limited-English-proficient, and handicapped should be geared toward helping students succeed in the regular program. Services for high ability students should remove ceilings, raise the conceptual level, and extend the depth and breadth of the regular program. These services should not displace a balanced curriculum. In addition to the traditional categorical needs, for which additional funds are often available, the regular program should also focus on other groups of students, such as the average students and the quiet, nondisruptive underachievers.

The standards for quality in this guide incorporate what is known about the effect of sound pedagogical practice on students. The amount of time students are actively engaged in learning correlates with how much they learn. Students engage themselves in learning when their natural curiosity is focused on the content of the curriculum, when they are active participants in learning, and when they are challenged by the task and yet have a high chance of succeeding. To create such quality learning experiences, teachers must plan and carry out an orderly flow of engaging classroom activities which focus students' interest on the curriculum content. While students need to develop the self-discipline to work independently, learning requires direct contact with the teacher at certain critical times. These times include initial exposure to new content and skills and to modeling. The critical times also include promptly responding to student work

(especially to check preliminary understanding and during initial practicing of new skills), coaching the student during extended applications of previously learned material, and guiding and encouraging students to think and use what they learn. The teacher's enormous influence on the climate of the classroom is of great importance in developing the students' sense of the value of learning and their intellectual, social, and personal abilities. Finally, each child's fundamental need to be recognized, respected, and cared for is the foundation for the teaching/learning relationship.

In the effective elementary classroom, teachers have primary responsibility for instruction. The primary focus on the teacher's time is on instruction. A variety of teaching strategies is employed, based on both the content to be learned and the needs and strengths of the student. Learning time is extended through regular homework, and the student's progress is monitored through regular assessment.

School is a place to learn. All children have the right to an environment conducive to learning, free from threats of disruption and rich in rewards for good learning behavior. Students feel secure and have good morale when they believe their school operates on the basis of clear rules and expectations. Students can count on all staff to apply the rules fairly and with consistent consequences. The students' academic learning time is protected from disruptions, whether the source of disruption is other students or staff members attending to noninstructional activities. The potential disruptive effects of pull-out programs on the intended beneficiaries have been minimized by using in-classroom services coordinated with the student's regular program. Staff attention is allocated justly to all students, with an emphasis on responding to the students' positive efforts to learn. Thus, the shy, quiet children receive their share of appropriate encouragement, along with those with more confidence and those who create disturbances. Likewise, staff members are treated justly, with an emphasis on acknowledging excellence in teaching.

A major strategy in improving and sustaining the effectiveness of a school is staff development. The program review standards are premised on two factors associated with quality staff development programs: (1) alignment of the content of the staff development program with agreed on school goals and priorities; and (2) application of sound pedagogical methods in delivery of the staff development.

The school's plans for improvements in curriculum and instructional methods will have direct implications for the content of staff development. There should be broad participation in the planning of the program, and unique needs of staff members should be met. The major allocation of staff development resources should be for priority improvements in curriculum and instruction. For staff development to have the intended effects on staff, it must, in itself, be an example of good instruction. For example, if the staff members are learning new skills, there should be modeling of the skills and practice and follow-up coaching should be provided for staff members in their own classrooms. In other words, staff development should be designed as a high quality learning experience for adults.

Strong leadership is a critical factor in planning, implementing, and evaluating a school program which is effective for students. Leadership is not merely certain attributes of an individual, but rather the focusing of the working relationships of everyone at the school on a common purpose. What people expect from, and deliver to, one another should be primarily influenced by their shared vision of what they are trying to accomplish. The organizational structures, management systems, formal and informal allocations of recognition and status, and the appropriation of resources, especially time, should all reflect the priorities inherent in this common purpose.

Clearly, the principal's role is to provide effective leadership. The principal can clarify the vision and channel the resources (human and fiscal), systems, and organization toward that vision. The principal should place priorities on setting goals and high standards, supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum and monitoring student progress, and supporting staff. But the principal cannot single-handedly create effective leadership. As staff members show initiative in furthering the achievement of the common purpose, they should be encouraged to take such initiative. Each staff member has some responsibility for supporting both administrators and colleagues in their efforts to achieve the common purpose.

There are a number of ways in which the sharing of a common purpose is cultivated. The particular mix and sequence will depend on the personal strengths and weaknesses of administrators and staff at the school, as well as the current situation at the school. Nonetheless, ingredients which bring about commonality of purpose include (1) commitment of the school board, superintendent, and principal; (2) professional consensus; (3) broad participation in the development or refinement of the purpose; and (4) the inspiring leadership of one or more individuals. Finally, for the common purpose to have a positive effect on students, the purpose must be based on a valid idea of what an educated person should learn at school; it must encompass aspirations for all children; and it must incorporate a sensible idea of what makes a school effective.

The reading criterion focuses on the effect of the reading program on students. It deals with completeness of content, identification of skills and concepts to be learned, range and depth of content to be learned, and aspects of instructional methodology that are unique to reading. In applying this criterion, consider all students participating in all programs offered by the school.

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All students are learning to read with understanding, think critically about what they read, and enjoy and respond actively to important literary works. Within the framework of reading for meaning, the focus for reading progresses in stages from skill acquisition to fluency and finally to reading to learn. Students learn to read in the early grades, steadily increase their fluency through the middle grades, and use their reading in the upper grades as a primary vehicle for learning. Students at all grade levels respond with ideas and opinions which go beyond what is explicit in the text as well as comprehend literal meaning. Further, they investigate, evaluate, and integrate information and ideas of increasing complexity and apply their reading experiences to new contexts. Students use reading to gain knowledge in literature, mathematics, science, social science, and fine arts.

Literature is a major part of the reading program. Students regularly read and are read important literature, both from required and recommended lists. They discuss what the literature means in both personal and cultural contexts. Frequent discussion and writing address the moral and social issues articulated in the literature. Teachers use literature to extend the students' experiences and to explore common values. Practicing authors are brought into the school to work with students.

Students learn to enter and explore the wide world of human experience accessible through reading; they regularly acquire new information and perspective through reading a variety of materials, including literary works, textbooks, newspapers, trade books, and encyclopedias. They read about familiar and interesting topics and relate new information to what they already know about the topic. Through discussion and writing, students interact with the teacher and one another about what they are reading. The use of workbooks is kept to a minimum. Students have easy access to a variety of books and periodicals in the classroom and have regularly scheduled periods for self-selected reading during class time. The resources that supplement the regular reading program, including the library, enhance and extend classroom instruction.

Teachers, the principal, and other adults at the school express enthusiasm for reading. Teachers and students view reading and writing as purposeful human communication which is essential, desirable, pleasurable, and attainable. All students, including the less able and those who have limited proficiency in the English language, are enthusiastic about the reading program. Teaching strategies and materials are adjusted to accommodate special needs and encourage participation for all students.

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- Beginning reading provides for continuous and systematic development of skills within the framework of reading for meaning.
- The focus of the reading curriculum shifts progressively from skills development to reading for fluency and to reading to learn.
- Reading for meaning is emphasized; students develop skills in the four levels of comprehension:
  - Literal: grouping information explicitly stated in the text
  - Interpretive: formulating ideas or opinions that are based upon the text read but not explicitly stated
  - Applicative: connecting or integrating new information, ideas, concepts, values, and feelings with previous experience and knowledge
  - Critical: synthesizing, analyzing, or evaluating the material read
- Students read major literature as an integral part of their regular reading program.
  - Literature selections include poetry, drama, biography, fiction, and nonfiction.
  - Students explore the concepts of a common heritage as transmitted through the use of high quality literature.
  - Students discuss and write about the ideas contained in literature.
  - Students are guided in their reading by a list of suggested titles.
  - Practicing authors work with students who are learning to write poetry, stories, and other literary forms.
- New vocabulary is regularly introduced in the reading program, and students are familiar with the origin and history of words.

- Students read a wide variety of materials to develop reading skills, increase reading fluency, and gain new information. Reading materials include:

  - Textbooks
  - Newspapers
  - Trade books
  - Encyclopedias
  - Short stories and novels
  - Poetry and plays
  - Biographies and nonfiction books about our social, physical, and moral worlds

- Students discuss what they are reading with the teacher and with one another. They frequently write about what they are reading, and workbook usage for comprehension development is kept to a minimum.

- Methods for motivating students are employed regularly by the teaching staff and include:

  - Reading assignments about topics which spark interest and natural curiosity
  - Use of reading to learn about our social, physical, and moral worlds
  - Self-selected reading materials
  - Appropriate modeling from adults at the school
  - Opportunities for students to hear stories that are read aloud

- Students with special needs participate in a reading program that is conducted in concert with the regular reading program. Special reading services supplement and do not occur in lieu of the regular reading program. To the extent possible, students with special needs should read the same material and discuss the same ideas and concepts as other students.

The written language criterion focuses on the effect of the written language program on students. It is built on the belief that writing is an effective tool for communication and should be part of the instructional program at all grade levels. The criterion also focuses on the completeness of content, identification of skills and concepts to be learned, range and depth of content, and appropriate instructional methodology accompanying the written language curriculum. In applying this criterion, consider all students in all programs offered by the school.

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Writing is valued as an effective tool for communication and is reinforced at all grade levels. The standards and expectations for written language are clearly defined and implemented at all grade levels. Students at all skill levels, including those with limited-English proficiency, are involved daily in writing activities which focus on effective communication. Students' writing fluency is developed through practice in writing for a variety of purposes and audiences and on a range of topics in a variety of forms. Students learn and practice all the stages or steps of writing: prewriting, writing, responding, revising, editing, developing skills with the conventions of writing, evaluating, and post-writing. Students understand and apply the conventions of writing, including grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, paragraphing, and format to the assignments they complete. Students receive ongoing feedback on their writing, and their own work is used to reinforce the conventions. The writing activities in which the students are engaged help them organize and clarify their thinking and generate and express thoughts logically and clearly. Students use writing in a meaningful way with evident purpose in all areas of the curriculum. Techniques and approaches for teaching writing are varied to match student needs. Writing skills are reinforced, applied, and extended by inclusion in other curricular areas.

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- There are written standards and expectations for student writing which are known and used by all teachers. Students write every day.
- K-1 students participate in activities which facilitate the transition from communicating through speaking to communicating through writing:
  - Students talk about experiences and their responses are recorded in writing for their later use.
  - Students illustrate what has been written through their art activities.
  - Student illustrations, along with written words, are displayed.
  - Students learn the written symbol system as well as the basic conventions of the English language.
- Students use writing skills in their daily work. Teachers respond to what is communicated as well as to the quality of the writing in all content areas.
- Students experience all of the following stages or steps in the writing process:
  - Prewriting activities, such as storytelling or dramatic activities by teachers and students, brainstorming, clustering words and ideas, discussing issues and ideas, reading literature, and interviewing
  - Writing activities, such as writing for a variety of purposes and audiences; about a variety of topics related to readings (e.g., book reports), experiences (letters), observations (nature studies), and ideas (essays); and in a variety of forms such as stories, poems, drama, and expository compositions
  - Responding activities, such as whole-class and small-group response sessions, using reproduced copies of students' work; written responses to each other's writing; comparison of different versions of the same piece of writing; and consultation with individual students regarding their writing
  - Revising activities, such as adding detail, deleting repetition; clarifying voice, point of view, and audience; substituting and arranging; and using comments of peers and teachers
  - Editing activities, such as using an editing checklist; editing the works of peers and other individuals; using references or handbooks on usage, grammar, and other conventions of writing; and conferring with teachers

- Activities that develop skill with the conventions of writing, such as prewriting exercises that generate vocabulary; direct teaching of the conventions as the need becomes evident in the student's writing; editing with the use of spelling and punctuation checks; exercises that make effective use of grammar and usage handbooks; practicing sentence-combining activities to illustrate sentence construction, variety, and ways of achieving economy of expression; and analysis of students' writing skills

- Evaluation activities, such as evaluating student writing only after a final draft has been prepared, instructing students on how to evaluate their own writing and that of their peers, and classwide evaluating sample papers in class

- Post-writing activities, such as displaying student writing on a bulletin board or in the community, publishing student writing in a school or community newspaper or in a classroom collection, exchanging student writing between classes or schools, and recognizing superior student writing through contests, awards, and announcements during assemblies

- All students, including those with limited proficiency in English, are experiencing a writing program in each major area of the curriculum, learning the unique writing requirements of each. Techniques and approaches are varied as appropriate to individual student needs.

- Writing achievement is assessed regularly on a schoolwide basis. These assessments include holistic and analytic measures of student writing samples. Parents are kept informed of student progress in writing.

The oral language criterion focuses on the effect of the oral language program on students. Completeness of content, identification of skills and concepts to be learned, the range and depth of the content, and the instructional methodology appropriate to oral language are considered. When applying this criterion, consider all students in all programs offered by the school.

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The oral language curriculum is clearly defined and is implemented throughout each grade level on a regular basis. Students are learning and applying listening and speaking skills in a range of situations and communication forms, for various purposes and audiences, and in a variety of speaking styles. Students are applying critical listening skills; are effectively communicating feelings, experiences, knowledge, and ideas with fluency and clarity; and are increasing their reasoning ability. All students are involved in activities designed to increase their confidence and skills in public speaking. The oral language activities at all grade levels build on the students' own academic, personal, and social experiences.

Teachers and other adults model correct and effective listening and speaking skills. Teachers support and reinforce students' listening and speaking skills by promoting conversation, discussion, presentations, and critical listening. Assessment of the students' speaking and listening skills is ongoing and is used as a basis for planning of instruction.

Students with special language needs, including limited-English-proficient students, speakers of nonstandard English, and exceptionally shy students, learn English through oral language activities designed to address their specific needs. They continue to increase their oral skills as they apply them to the learning of subject area content. The dialects or primary languages of speakers of nonstandard English and other languages are treated with respect by the staff members and other students as they learn to master standard English.

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- Students learn and apply listening and speaking skills in a variety of contexts:
  - Situations--informal, formal, and interpersonal
  - Purposes--informing, learning, persuading, evaluating messages, facilitating social interaction, sharing feelings, and using imaginative, creative expression
  - Audiences--classmates, teachers, peers, family, and community
  - Communication forms--conversation, group discussion, interview, drama, public speaking, and oral interpretation
  - Speaking styles
- Students receive systematic instruction in oral language which promotes language creation, comprehension, and utilization. Instructional activities appropriate to the developmental needs and abilities of the students address:
  - Diction
  - Fluency
  - Intonation
  - Vocabulary
  - Syntax
  - Organization
- Students regularly participate in activities to develop their oral language skills, such as:
  - Presenting oral material through reports, drama, and speeches
  - Debating issues
  - Holding discussions on specific topics
  - Sharing ideas, experiences, and feelings
- Students participate in activities which build confidence in speaking such as:
  - Choral reading
  - Readers' theater
  - Dramatic activities
  - Storytelling
- Teachers and other adults model correct and effective listening and speaking skills; support and reinforce students' oral language skills by promoting conversation, discussions, and storytelling; and consistently reward students for using correct oral language.
- Teachers assess the students' oral communication skills throughout the year, giving regular feedback. A variety of assessment methods is used, including teachers' continuous monitoring, discussion of the results of standardized and criterion-referenced tests, interpretation of audience-based rating scales, and use of self-evaluation instruments.
- Students with special language needs, including limited-English-proficient students, students who speak nonstandard English, and exceptionally shy students, learn and develop English through oral language activities. They continue to increase their oral skills as they apply them to the learning of subject area content.

The mathematics criterion focuses on the effect of the mathematics program on the students. It deals with the completeness of the curriculum, the development of essential understandings and problem-solving ability, and the instructional setting for the study of mathematics. In applying this criterion, consider all students participating in all programs offered by the school.

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The mathematics curriculum engages students' curiosity and sense of inquiry in well-defined content that includes all strands at all grade levels. Essential understandings are distinguished from those that provide greater depth and breadth, and all boys and girls develop these understandings. Students master the single-digit number facts and, with appropriate use of the calculator, are comfortable with and proficient in numerical computations; they routinely estimate before any calculation and use the most appropriate computational method and tool for each calculation. Lessons and assignments are structured to emphasize student understanding and ability to use mathematics. Students understand the structure and logic of mathematics and use the language of mathematics.

Problem solving is a major part of the mathematics program. Students are regularly involved in formulating problems and in choosing approaches and strategies for solving the problems. All students are taught and understand how to work through the stages of problem solving. They are encouraged to be inventive, guess, and estimate. Their natural fascination with how puzzling problems are solved is encouraged and used to motivate discussions of strategies and tactics. They are frequently asked to explain what they are doing and why and to judge the reasonableness of the answers they generate. Students are challenged with both the real world and abstract problems, including complex situations that require the use of higher-level thinking skills.

Concepts and skills from all strands are interwoven, reinforced, and extended through lessons and assignments so that students experience mathematics as a cumulative subject. New concepts are studied first in terms of students' concrete experiences; manipulatives and other concrete materials are used to enable students to gain direct experience with the underlying principle of each concept. Lessons incorporate and build on skills and concepts previously learned. The instructional setting is varied and provides students with the opportunity for individual work, small-group, cooperative learning activities, and whole-class participation. Student grouping is based on ongoing assessment of student need.

Supplementary services are coordinated with the regular mathematics program to focus on fundamentals as they are presented in the regular program and do not rely on repeating low-level skills from earlier grades. Mathematics is interdisciplinary; students use their mathematical skills in other subject areas in a variety of situations.

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- Instruction covers the strands of number, measurement, geometry, patterns and functions, statistics and probability, logic, and algebra in all grade levels.
- Curriculum and instruction focus on students' understanding of fundamental concepts rather than their ability to memorize algorithms or computational procedures.
- Essential understandings are distinguished from those that provide greater depth and breadth.
  - Teachers are clear on the essential understandings and on how the learning of specific concepts and skills depends on these understandings.
  - Instruction is organized to ensure that every student acquires these understandings.

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- Patterns and functions, statistics and probability, and geometry are taught each year, with the subject matter gradually increasing in complexity.
- Instruction emphasizes understanding and use of mathematical concepts and promotes the use of the language of mathematics.
- Students add, subtract, multiply, and divide whole numbers, decimals, and fractions with facility and accuracy.
  - Students use estimation to aid in selecting a method for exact calculation and to establish the reasonableness of results.
  - Students use mental arithmetic for all single-digit operations and for simple manipulations such as doubling, halving, and multiplying or dividing by powers of ten.

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- Students use the calculator correctly and confidently when mental calculation would be difficult or when pencil-and-paper calculation would be inefficient.

- Students use computer programs, as appropriate, to perform extensive or repetitive calculations, to simulate real situations, and to perform experiments that aid in the understanding of mathematical concepts.

- All students are taught and understand how to work through each stage of problem solving, including problem exploration, formulation, strategy development, solution activity, and interpretation of results. Lessons and assignments are designed to include:

  - Working through the stages over time
  - Formulating several problems from a given description of a situation
  - Representing the same information in different ways, e.g., verbal, graphic, and symbolic
  - Working with more or less information than necessary

- Problem-solving approaches are demonstrated and discussed. Multiple-solution methods are emphasized.

- In working with more complex situations, students:

  - Formulate and model problems.
  - Screen relevant from irrelevant information.
  - Organize information.
  - Make conjectures and test their validity.
  - Analyze patterns and relationships.
  - Use inductive and deductive processes.
  - Identify or evaluate alternative mathematical approaches.
  - Find and test solutions.
  - Interpret results.

- Lessons often begin with imaginative situations likely to engage students' curiosity.

  - Students apply previously learned skills to situations they have not seen before.

  - Students relate concepts to natural situations in and out of school.

- Lessons and assignments interweave the strands and appropriate concepts and skills from previous lessons; new or extended concepts are connected to what students already know.

- Students at all grade levels experience concrete repesentations of new concepts as a foundation for symbolic representations. There is a smooth transition from concrete to abstract.

- Students work in groupings suitable to the content and matched to student needs and strengths; for example: whole-class discussion/exploration, small groups engaged in problem solving, individual work, peer tutoring pairs.

- All students are assessed at the beginning of the school year and regularly throughout the year. Teachers use the results of student assessment to determine the need for reteaching and further practice.

- Teachers introduce, model, and provide guided practice for new concepts before students proceed on their own. Homework includes independent practice of concepts that have been mastered in class. There is daily review of homework concepts.

- Students receiving remedial instruction cover all the core fundamentals of the mathematics program. Remedial work is keyed to regular classroom instruction.

- Computers are a major tool of education. Their value in creating geometric displays, organizing and graphing data, simulating real-life situations, and generating numerical sequences and patterns is recognized. Students are developing their abilities to interact with computer programs in highly individualized ways to explore and experiment with mathematical concepts.

The science criterion focuses on the effect of the science program on the students. It deals with the completeness of the science program, identification of the skills and concepts to be learned, the range and depth of the content, and the instructional methodologies that enable students to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge in science. When applying this criterion, consider all students participating in all programs offered by the school.

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Students discover and learn about the natural world by using the methods of science as extensions of their own curiosity and wonder. Students acquire knowledge of the biological and physical sciences from a balanced science curriculum which includes the fundamental concepts, terms, processes, and skills. Building on their understanding of science concepts, students learn about the logic of the scientific method, the techniques of the science laboratory, and the applications of science to the world around us. Students also develop the science process or critical thinking skills of science: observing, comparing, organizing, inferring, relating, and applying.

Instructional methods and the sequential introduction of new experiences in the primary grades lay the foundation for more conceptual content in the intermediate grades. Instructional methods emphasize using scientific techniques as learning techniques; lessons regularly require students to observe and interpret phenomena in natural and laboratory settings. Concepts and theories from readings are applied to observed phenomena. Basic science texts are supplemented by a variety of materials which include laboratory specimens, scientific equipment, and an array of simulations that employ technology. Community resources such as local scientists and engineers, parks and nature trails, and science and natural museums are used to expand the science program.

Basic skills are applied and extended throughout the science program. Students learn how to read scientific writing, create and develop graphs and charts, solve complex problems involving different kinds of data, apply mathematics skills in analyzing data, record observations in an organized fashion, write laboratory and research reports, and explain scientific material orally.

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- Students experience science as a regular part of their curriculum.
  - Science instruction is provided on a regular basis. (Students devote at least one-half hour per day, on the average, to learning science.)
  - Science goals and curriculum standards are reinforced throughout the school program (in both academic and extracurricular activities).
  - Students' progress in science is monitored, and feedback is given to students and parents.
- Instructional content focuses on conceptual understanding of the facts, principles, and theories of science as the foundation on which the processes, techniques, and applications of science are based. Teachers cultivate students' concept formation beyond rote facts and vocabulary.
- Students receive instruction in a comprehensive balanced science curriculum which includes:
  - The life, earth, and physical sciences
  - The interdependence of people and the natural environment
  - The historical development of science by persons and cultures of different backgrounds
  - The relationship between science, technology, and society
  - Participatory (hands-on) laboratory techniques
  - Facts about careers in science and technology
- Students observe and conduct experiments to learn scientific processes, including:
  - Observing
  - Comparing
  - Organizing
  - Inferring
  - Relating
  - Applying
- In addition to hands-on experiences, students learn science content from field observations, teacher demonstrations, group experiments, individual science fair projects, and a variety of print and electronic media as a part of their regular instruction.
- Assignments include such activities as:
  - Observing and recording natural phenomena inside and outside the school
  - Pursuing science projects involving teacher guidance and parent involvement

- Teachers lead discussions which challenge students to reason and think about their own ideas and perceptions of nature. Students are encouraged to articulate their own naive theories and test them against the accumulated evidence and knowledge of science.

- Students apply thinking and communications skills in learning science. Examples include:

  - Using computational skills in recording and analyzing data
  - Using graphs and charts to summarize and portray data
  - Reading scientific writing
  - Writing research reports and the results of lab experiments
  - Presenting scientific material orally

- Community resources enrich the science program, including student interactions with scientists, engineers, and technicians. Field trips to science and natural history museums, tide pools, and nature trails are also encouraged.

## HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE

The history-social science criterion focuses on the effect of the history-social science program, the skills and concepts to be learned, the range and depth of the content, and the way in which the instruction received by the students enables them to acquire the skills and knowledge that make up history-social science. When applying this criterion, consider all students participating in all programs offered by the school.

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Students are engaged in and excited about the study of history and social science, which are regular parts of the instructional program at all grade levels. The elementary curriculum prepares students for higher grade level study of the growth of civilization and the development of constitutional democracy. Students develop an understanding and appreciation of democratic ideals, including cooperation, peaceful change, civic responsibility, honesty, respect for others, equality of opportunity, universal education, and respect for law. Students participate in democratic processes within the school setting and are encouraged to apply those principles in the community.

Instructional activities in the lower grades draw from the lives and events of history that interest the young child and introduce the topics of social science as they apply to the experiences of family member, student, friend, teammate, consumer, and citizen.

Activities in higher grades draw from lives of individuals and events which have shaped the history of California and the United States. Attention is given to the growth of indigenous civilizations and the arrival of Europeans, Africans, and Asians and the transplant of their cultures to the Western Hemisphere. Students discuss and apply the topics of social science--tradition, values, power, change, conflict, social control, cooperation, interdependence, and causality.

Instruction emphasizes group discussion and team projects. Students are guided to think and to write critically, using evidence, reasoning, and judgment as they analyze historical, political, and socioeconomic situations. Controversial issues are addressed appropriately for the age level and maturity of the students.

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- There is a definite period of time in the school day for instruction in history-social science.
- In the lower grades, students are reading interesting stories about events and individuals that have had an impact on life in America, California, and their community.
- Students in grades 4 through 6 study the history and geography of California, the United States, and the world.
- Teachers help students make hypotheses, generalize, infer, compare and contrast, and write analytically about historical and current events, using research, evidence, reasoning, and judgment. Activities planned for this purpose are frequent, including:
  - Writing reports and essays
  - Researching information
  - Analyzing historical and social situations
  - Discussing and debating issues
  - Doing homework that extends classroom activities
  - Speaking publicly
- Physical and political geography are part of the curriculum. Students recognize and interpret various kinds of charts, graphs, and maps, land and water forms, and current and past political boundaries.
- Teachers use literature, biographies, and documents to motivate and enlighten students. Music and art of the period and the culture being studied are part of the curriculum.
- In higher grades students research and read to acquire a knowledge of the major eras of U.S. history.
- There is an organized current events program where students report, analyze, interpret, and discuss information from a variety of sources, including magazine and newspaper articles, radio and television, audiovisual aids, films, political cartoons, and class speakers.
- Teachers use group discussions to help students understand and relate together historical economic and social events and ideas.
- Students work together in pairs or small groups in developing research projects, reports, dramas, and plays in which knowledge can be interpreted and applied.

The visual and performing arts criterion focuses on the effect of the visual and performing arts program on students. Completeness of content, identification of skills and concepts to be learned, the range and depth of the content, and the way in which the instruction received by the students enable them to acquire skills and knowledge in the visual and performing arts. When applying this criterion, consider all students participating in all programs offered by the school.

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Beginning in kindergarten and continuing through grade six, students engage in art experiences which teach them how to enjoy and value major works of art and how to express themselves through their own art activities, which include both the visual and performing arts. These experiences progress from perception and creative expression toward complex and high level conceptual development as students are able to relate the arts to personal experience. The art experiences, which range from frequent short projects to activities sustained over a long period of time, enable students to develop creative capacities, auditory and interpretive skills, and awareness of movement and sound. Teachers structure time for students to apply creativity and originality in activities that help them develop visual images, communicate ideas, and express individual thoughts and feelings.

Performing arts activities include drama, dance, and music. Activities in drama focus on elements, actions, and characterizations. They provide a vehicle for student expression. Students develop improvisations and plays, view theatrical events, express characterization of simple situations, and convey emotional qualities through speech and formal acting techniques. Students develop their intuition about movement as an expression through dance. Music experiences are continuous throughout the grades and enable the students to develop an appreciation of a wide variety of music. Students are knowledgeable about music.

Students study, understand, and appreciate the visual and performing arts traditions of their own and other cultures. They learn to evaluate the aesthetic, moral, cultural, and historical content of art and to relate these elements to the work of various artists. Students demonstrate knowledge of historical and cultural development through different forms of artistic expression and make cultural and historical connections, including analyzing symbols, myths, metaphors, and style. Fine arts are part of the reading and literature, history, social science, math, science, and language arts curricula.

The principal and staff members support the visual and performing arts program as an integral part of the students' education. Guidance and encouragement from staff result in regular student participation in music, drama, dance, and visual arts programs. They encourage serious and promising students to pursue their demonstrated interest in the visual and performing arts. Students are exposed to examples of high quality art, and practicing artists are brought into the school program on a regular basis. Community resources, including local exhibits and museums, are used to extend learning beyond the classroom. Students' artwork is displayed throughout the school and is used to enhance the overall appearance of the school.

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- Time is specifically allocated to instruction in the visual and performing arts.
- Students have early and regular access to diversified art experiences, beginning with creative expression and moving toward more complex and higher level conceptual development.
- Fine arts experiences range from short activities to projects sustained over a long period of time. These experiences include:
  - Art history
  - Art appreciation
  - Production
- During instructional art time, students use a variety of media to:
  - Express their individual ideas, thoughts, and feelings in simple media.
  - Develop visual and tactile perception.
  - Master technical skills of creative expression.
  - Communicate their ideas and feelings through graphic symbols, using balance and contrast.
  - Demonstrate their abilities to apply design elements and principles.

- Students develop dramatic abilities and understandings through improvisation and plays, including:

  - Dramatizing literary selections
  - Viewing theatrical events emphasizing player-audience relationships and audience etiquette
  - Expressing characterization of simple situations
  - Conveying emotional qualities through speech and formal acting techniques

- Dance experiences are provided to students as a significant mode of expression and include:

  - Kinesthetic experience of movement
  - Response to sensory stimuli
  - Motor efficiency and control

- Musical activities include:

  - Learning to use simple musical instruments, including the human voice
  - Singing and/or playing a musical instrument before a group
  - Listening to, interpreting, and critiquing vocal and instrumental music
  - Learning the history and mechanics of music
  - Presenting musical productions

- Visual and performing arts opportunities are integrated into other areas of the curriculum, including reading and literature, history, social science, math, science, and English language arts.

- The principal and staff members perceive fine arts as central to the students' education.

- Serious and promising students are encouraged to pursue their demonstrated interests in the visual and performing arts, including activities that encourage students to:

  - Participate in the instrumental music program and select a musical instrument according to their growth level.
  - Work with artists in residence or other appropriate modes.
  - Utilize community resources, including local arts exhibits that extend artistic learning beyond the classroom.

- Student artwork appears throughout the school and is used to enhance the overall appearance of the school setting.

The schoolwide effectiveness criterion focuses on how conditions at the school combine to enable students to be successful learners. It deals with the school's curriculum, the implementation of the curriculum, the impact of the curriculum on the students, and instructional methodology. In applying this criterion, consider schoolwide activities that support academic growth for all students.

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School and district policies and practices reflect an academic focus on student learning and achievement. Students participate in a broad-based curriculum which includes reading and literature, oral and written expression, mathematics, science, history-social science, visual and performing arts, and physical education and health. The goals and objectives of this written curriculum clearly define rigorous content consistent with professional and community standards. The curriculum emphasizes enabling students to apply what they learn.

The selection of instructional materials, the design of lessons and assignments, and the determination of the scope and focus of assessment are coordinated and aligned with the knowledge, skills, and values defined in the goals and objectives of the written curriculum. The sequence of instruction received by the student reflects a progressive shift in emphasis from basic-skills-centered instruction to content- and application-centered instruction. High expectations for what students learn reflect a schoolwide belief that all students can learn.

Student achievement, as determined by a variety of measures, reflects significant increase or is maintained at a high level. The assessment data evidence learning across the curriculum. The content of the assessment is aligned with the curriculum, and instructional practices and procedures are modified on the basis of that assessment. Students are learning content beyond factual knowledge and rote skills, including knowledge of ideas, concepts, and issues, and complex thinking and communication skills such as analysis, interpretation, evaluation, problem solving, and application. Assessment data indicate that students with differing abilities and needs (e.g., students of high ability, disadvantaged, limited-English-proficient (LEP), or handicapped students) are achieving at their highest potential.

Students' interest in the subjects being learned is evident. There is a maximum use of time for instruction, free from interruption, and students are actively engaged in learning activities. Learning time is extended through regular homework, which is integral to the learning task and which challenges students to apply what they have learned. Instruction is teacher-directed, using a variety of teaching strategies and materials matched to both the content to be learned and the needs and strengths of students. Students' daily work is at a level of difficulty which both challenges them to learn and grow and provides experiences of success and competence in learning. Students' exposure to new concepts and skills is initiated through direct instruction from the teacher. There is timely teacher response to student work to verify comprehension, especially during early practice of new skills. Students are coached by the teacher as they practice and apply previously learned material. Teachers encourage and guide students to think and communicate about what they are learning.

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- The academic program is the focus of the goals and objectives developed by the principal, staff, and parents at the school.

- Students receive broad-based curriculum, including instruction in reading, writing, oral language, literature, mathematics, science, history, social science, visual and performing arts, physical education, and health. All students have access to this balanced curriculum.

- Instruction and assessment in each subject area are coordinated and aligned with the goals and objectives of the written curriculum. Students' instruction in basic skills and content areas reflects the goals and objectives of the curriculum.

- The goals and objectives of the curriculum are clearly defined and are evident in:

  - Lesson plans and classroom work
  - Selection of instructional materials
  - Student assignments
  - Assessment practices

- Grade-level expectations are established and are put into practice for skills, knowledge, and values to be learned in each area of the curriculum. They reflect high standards and expectations. Grade-level expectations have also been set for homework, the required reading lists by subject area, and the quantity and quality of writing assignments in each subject area.

- The curriculum exhibits rigorous academic content consistent with professional standards exemplified in California state frameworks, county courses of study, curriculum planning handbooks, publications of professional curriculum associations, and the district course of study; and with community standards and expectations.

- There is an emphasis on enabling students to use and apply what they learn, beyond rote drill and practice, as evidenced in:

  - Allocation of class time
  - Quality of in-class assignments and homework
  - Samples of student work
  - Standards of achievement

- Assessment data in the major curriculum areas indicate that student achievement (including upper quartile, middle achieving, lower quartile, LEP, and disadvantaged students) is increasing or being maintained at a high level for:

  - Rote skills and facts
  - Ideas, concepts, and issues
  - Thinking and communication skills, such as formulating and solving problems, analyzing and interpreting information, drawing inferences, evaluating complex situations, thinking critically, expressing thoughts logically in written and oral form, or forming independent judgments

- Assessment is aligned with curriculum and instruction and includes a variety of methods suited to what is being assessed:

  - Work samples, demonstrations, presentations
  - Teacher-made tests
  - Textbook chapter tests/questions
  - Criterion-referenced tests
  - Norm-referenced tests

- Students learn practical study skills as a part of the regular instructional program. They include:

  - Note-taking
  - Outlining
  - Reading for main ideas
  - Following good study habits



- The curriculum at each grade level is articulated with the next higher grade. Articulation between the regular and special program staffs is frequent and regular.

- Classroom time is well managed for maximum concentration on teaching and learning activities. Teachers' interactions with students are frequent and related to the content of the curriculum. Students understand their assignments and have sufficient time to complete them; their progress is regularly monitored; and they receive timely feedback on their work.

- Direct instruction by the teacher is evident at critical points in learning:

  - Presenting new concepts and skills
  - Modeling
  - Guiding early practice of new skills
  - Coaching extended applications
  - Encouraging and guiding students to think and communicate about what they learn

- Assignments are challenging to students and yet within reach so that hard work brings success. Students are proud of what they accomplish, and their academic success is recognized by the principal, their teachers, and their peers.

- A variety of teaching strategies and materials is used. In this way the content to be learned and the needs of the students are matched.

- Teaching methods are geared to the intended level of learning, application, analysis, synthesis, and judgment of the material presented.

- All students are expected to complete every homework assignment. Homework is reviewed and returned in a timely manner.

- Instructional materials, approaches, and pacing are differentiated, as appropriate, for students with different needs and abilities.

The special needs criterion focuses on the extent to which the services provided for students with special needs enable them to be successful learners in the regular program. The criterion applies to limited-English-proficient students, educationally disadvantaged students, those students achieving at a level significantly below their peers, gifted and talented students, and students receiving special education instruction and services.

The information gained through an assessment of the special needs services is added to what the reviewers have learned about the instruction of students as they participate in the regular program. Information about how students are learning and what students are learning in the specific curriculum areas is also included to form a complete picture of the effect of instruction on students with special needs.

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The special services the students are receiving support their successful participation in the regular program and each student with special needs is expected to master to the extent of his or her ability the same curriculum provided all students. For the high ability or high achieving student, special services remove ceilings, raise the conceptual level, and extend the breadth and depth of the regular program. The curriculum, materials, and methods used in the regular classroom are appropriate to the special needs and activities of each student whether those needs result from a handicapping condition, a primary language other than English, or achievement levels significantly above or below those of the majority of students. Student work is rigorous and challenging for each student.

Students are experiencing success in learning the skills and concepts of the curriculum commensurate with their highest potential and are feeling positive about themselves as learners. Each adult working with the students is knowledgeable about their needs, capabilities, and learning progress, and expects them to be successful in school. The special services received by students with multiple needs have been prioritized so that the greatest needs are being addressed first. Ongoing communication and collaboration among the classroom teacher(s) and specialist staff members have resulted in an integrated program for each student, allowing him or her to experience a continuity of services. Special services supplement the quality of instruction students would have received from the regular program alone.

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- Students with special needs have equal access to the curriculum provided for all students.
  - The total curriculum received by students with special needs is well balanced. It includes fine arts, science, and social studies, in addition to the basic skills of writing, reading, language, and math.
  - As much as possible, special services are provided within the regular classroom setting.
  - When students must be pulled out of class to receive special services, the pull-out sessions are scheduled for times that do not preclude the students' acquisition of the basic skills and knowledge of the curriculum.
  - The use of the primary languages of the limited-English-proficient students allows them to continue learning the basic skills and knowledge of the curriculum at a normal pace while developing fluency in English.
  - Students on individual education plans (IEPs) participate in the regular program to the full extent permitted by their handicap.

- The special services received by each special needs student support his or her participation in the regular program.
  - Special services instruction is coordinated with regular instruction through use of textbooks and other instructional materials, as well as through articulation of the skills and concepts being learned.
  - The curriculum materials and methods of instruction used in each setting are appropriate to the student's needs, abilities, and language proficiencies.
  - Learning activities in each setting build upon and extend the student's current level of knowledge.
  - Special services are provided with minimum disruption to the student's participation in the regular classroom.
- The lessons and assignments received by the students with special needs are as rigorous and challenging for their diagnosed level as those received by all students.

- The regular classroom teachers and the specialist teachers expect each student to achieve up to his or her highest potential.
- The lessons and assignments challenge each student to (1) develop the critical thinking skills of inquiring, analyzing, solving problems, and evaluating situations; and (2) exercise creativity.

- Student work shows that students are experiencing success in learning the skills and concepts of the curriculum, and it is evident that they feel successful as learners in each curricular area.

- The regular classroom teachers and those providing special services meet regularly to plan and replan each student's program of instruction.
  - Both initial and ongoing assessment data are shared between the regular classroom teachers and the specialist staff.
  - There are regular opportunities for regular and specialist teachers to meet and share information about the student's progress and to plan instructional and support services for him or her, such as through team teaching or a student study team approach.
  - Regular classroom teachers and specialist staff members freely communicate with each other on an informal as well as a formal basis.
  - Parents are kept fully informed of their child's progress.

## THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The learning environment criterion focuses on how effectively the school and classroom environment support and encourage each student's academic, personal, and social growth. In applying this criterion, consider (1) classroom environment; and (2) school environment. Be sure to include all participating students, including students receiving special services.

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The learning environment of the school reflects an academic focus. The principal, staff members, parents, and students perceive school as a place to learn and hold high standards and expectations for student achievement and behavior. They view learning as the most important source of joy and personal significance offered to each child by the school. Staff members are task-oriented and work to maximize the time students are engaged in academically productive activity; classroom interruptions are held to a minimum. Students are motivated and exhibit initiative for learning; they are comfortable approaching their teachers to gain or clarify information. Teachers manage the learning environment so that all students have equal opportunities to learn.

Respect and support among and between students and staff members are evident throughout the school. Students and staff members are proud of and enjoy their school. Together they develop and maintain a safe and orderly environment for learning. Schoolwide rules are reasonable and known by all, and each staff member enforces the rules consistently and equitably.

Schoolwide procedures for recognition of and awards for student achievement and citizenship are designed so that each student has the opportunity to be recognized for good citizenship and for significant achievement.

Staff members routinely work together to identify and solve day-to-day problems of instruction, student discipline, student schedules, and so forth to achieve schoolwide goals and objectives. The morale of staff members is high and is maintained through established procedures for recognizing individual strengths and special contributions to the students and the school community.

Home-school communication is well established and ongoing. Parents are kept informed of their child's progress in school, and input from the parents is sought on a regular basis. Resources of the community are used to enhance the learning environment of the school.

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- It is evident throughout the school that the primary business of the school is learning.
  - Students and staff show enthusiasm for learning and pride in the environmental conditions which encourage learning.
  - Students are punctual and eagerly settle into work at the beginning of each instructional period, working through each assignment.
  - Teachers are learning-oriented; they begin on time and maintain student involvement throughout the lesson.
  - Announcements do not interrupt instruction.
  - Classroom disruptions resulting from pulling students out for special services are minimal.
  - Teachers manage instruction so that each student receives an equal share of teaching time, attention, and learning material.

- Standards and expectations for student achievement and behavior are widely known.
  - Students, parents, and staff members are all involved in setting standards for behavior.
  - Students and staff members alike believe that the school rules are reasonable and are consistently and equitably enforced.
  - Students are taught the school and classroom rules and are held accountable for maintaining them throughout the school year.
  - Students perceive school as a safe place to be and feel that their teachers, the principal, and other instructional and support staff support them as learners.

- The cleanliness and appearance of the classrooms, halls, restrooms and school grounds and the enthusiasm of the students and staff members attest to the pride the students and staff members feel in their school.

- Students and staff members receive recognition for good work.
  - Students are recognized for their citizenship and for academic achievements in assemblies, by classroom or grade level; through special recognition by the principal; through award notices sent to parents; and so forth.
  - Teachers and other instructional staff members receive recognition that acknowledges excellence in teaching, curricular knowledge, special abilities to work with other staff members and with students, and willingness to contribute additional time to student activities.
- Staff members work cooperatively in developing and carrying out schoolwide policies. They respect each other as professionals and recognize one another's individual strengths.
- Parents are kept informed of the progress of their children on an ongoing basis, as well as school goals, school rules and student responsibilities, homework policies, and special activities of the school. This is done through newsletters, teacher and principal communiques, conferences, and so forth.
- Parents have regular opportunities to share their expectations regarding the school program, including participation at school site council and other council meetings.
- Resources of the community, such as parks, businesses, libraries and museums, community groups, and local governmental agencies, support the school and are used to enhance the learning environment of the school.

The staff development criterion focuses on how effective staff development activities have been in increasing the skills and knowledge needed by adults in the school to implement an effective instructional program. In applying this criterion, consider the effect of staff development on the instructional program, including services for students with special needs and abilities.

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Staff development activities are planned, carried out, and evaluated for the purpose of improving the job-related knowledge and skills of principals, teachers, instructional aides, classroom volunteers, and other student support personnel, including parents who regularly interact with students at all grade levels. By increasing awareness and refining skills and by changing attitudes and behaviors, these activities are enabling staff members to deliver curriculum and instruction which is rigorous, challenging, and responsive to student needs.

The content of the staff development program clearly reflects established school goals for curriculum, instruction, assessment, and student achievement. A careful assessment of participants' strengths, competencies, interests, and needs as they relate to the school's goals is used in determining content. Staff members understand the goals and objectives of the school's planned program, their individual responsibilities for implementing the program, and how what they do fits with what others do. Each adult learns whatever is necessary to carry out effectively his or her part of the program, and staff members utilize information and techniques acquired through staff development activities in their day-to-day instruction.

The staff development program includes effective teaching methods and techniques. Instructional strategies include modeling, coaching, and other follow-up support in the classroom and are directly related to staff needs. Adult interaction at the school sustains high interest in professional growth and improvement. There is an obvious commitment to continued participation in staff development activities. The staff development program is actively supported by the administration through participation and commitment of time and resources.

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- The content of the staff development program clearly reflects established school goals for curriculum, instruction, assessment, and student achievement.
  - The staff development program is school-based and addresses both individual and schoolwide goals.
  - An assessment of student progress in relation to the identified curriculum is used to determine any areas of instruction requiring either individual or whole-staff instruction and support.
  - An assessment of the participants' strengths, competencies, interests, and needs is used to determine the content of the staff development program.
- The staff development program is designed to improve the job-related skills and knowledge of all personnel who work with students at the school.
- The staff development activities help staff members refine existing skills as well as learn new skills, develop attitudes and behaviors that are more effective in the classroom setting, and gain knowledge necessary for effective implementation of the curriculum.
- It is evident through classroom observation and from talking with staff members that they are using information and techniques which they learned through staff development activities.
- Staff members understand the goals and objectives of the planned program, their responsibilities in carrying out the program, and the interconnection of those responsibilities with the responsibilities of others in implementing the program.
- Those who conduct the staff development program use effective teaching practices, including:
  - Modeling
  - Guided practice
  - Coaching
  - Peer observation, support, and assistance
- Staff are directly involved in planning staff development activities and conducting an evaluation of them and are committed to continued participation.
- Staff development activities are systematically evaluated, and the evaluation results are used to design or redesign staff development activities.
- The administration actively supports the program through participation, allocation of time for staff development activities, and use of fiscal and personnel resources.

## LEADERSHIP

The leadership criterion focuses on the extent to which schoolwide leadership is used to promote and support the instructional program for all students. In applying this criterion, consider all avenues of leadership within the school setting, including those vested in the principal, assistant principal, program coordinators, resource teachers, grade level chairpersons, and teachers in a leadership role on committees and special assignments.

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School leaders, who include the principal, assistant principal, program coordinators, resource teachers, grade level chairpersons, and teachers in a leadership role on committees and special assignments, are knowledgeable about the curriculum and instructional practices. Leadership supports and encourages staff members' efforts to improve instruction.

There is a strong academic orientation throughout the school program based on clear expectations for learning and behavior from school leaders. The local governing board, the superintendent, and the principal support this common purpose through policies, personnel practices, and allocation of resources. School leaders clarify and promote school goals and high expectations for achievement.

Teachers regularly receive timely and meaningful feedback based on classroom observation, student performance, and discussion. Staff differences in skill, styles, and personal values are considered in making assignments; these differences are considered in justly allocating human resources to students.

Leadership and responsibility are shared among staff members; adults model the leadership and cooperation they expect from students; staff members participate in many decisions; delegated leadership is respected.

School leaders promote and support improvements in the school program consistent with school and district goals. Time is allocated to a regular process of analyzing and evaluating data about student performance and motivation, staff performance and morale, and instructional program implementation. Based on discussion and understanding of what causes the results evident in these data, plans for improvement are made and implemented. There is broad-based participation in and commitment to this well-organized and well-managed improvement process. Curriculum and staff development resources are allocated in support of the planned improvements. Leadership encourages and supports the use of outside practitioners and experts in the curriculum areas being improved. District and state curriculum guides and materials and standards from curriculum and other professional associations are available and utilized in planning.

School leaders focus the motivation and talents of staff members on improving and sustaining excellence in the educational program of the school. Staff and student morale is high, as evidenced by good attendance and enthusiasm for school as a place to learn. School leaders work harmoniously with the community, and parents are active supporters of the school program.

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- Goals, standards, and expectations have been stated by school and school district leaders for student achievement and behavior. These statements are central to planning and implementation at all levels and are well known throughout the school.
- Staff members expect all students to achieve these standards, and all adults feel responsible for the achievement and behavior of all students.
- The content of curriculum and the sequence and materials of instruction are coordinated throughout the grade levels in each curricular area.
- Schoolwide procedures for placement and promotion of students are established and consistently used.
- School leaders protect instruction from interruption by stressing discipline and supporting teachers in discipline matters, by keeping public places (halls, grounds) quiet, and by minimizing classroom interruptions from the intercom, bells, and/or visitors.
- Criteria, procedures, and practices for personnel evaluation at all levels demonstrate the importance of learning as the focus of the school district.
- Instructional supervisors give timely feedback and coaching to teachers based on classroom observations, student performance, and discussion. Observation with feedback includes but is not limited to:
  - Implementation of curricular goals and objectives

- Maximum use of time for instruction
- Interaction with students
- Lessons' design and presentation
- Development of thinking and communication skills
- Opportunities to express creativity
- Relationship of the strengths and weaknesses of various teaching methods to the content and learning goal

- Adults model good leadership and cooperation.

- The school board, superintendent, and principal support the fair and consistent application of school rules and the recognition of positive learning behavior.

- Leaders organize, manage, and support an ongoing improvement process which has broad-based staff and parent commitment with participation. This process includes:

  - Evaluation of student and staff performance
  - Evaluation of the curriculum and its implementation
  - Analysis of symptoms and determination of causes
  - Plans for action
  - Strategies for implementation

- Assistance and leadership from outside the district are utilized, including materials, training, guides, and standards, from:

  - Curriculum associations
  - Professional organizations
  - Offices of county superintendents of schools and the State Department of Education
  - Institutions of higher education
  - Teacher education and computer centers, Special Education Regional Network, and other regional training centers

- Leaders allocate resources--material and human--into instruction and the improvement of instruction.

- Leaders participate in regularly scheduled professional development which emphasizes curriculum and instructional practices.

## PLANNING, IMPLEMENTING, AND EVALUATING THE SCHOOL PROGRAM

The planning, implementation, and evaluation criterion focuses on how effective the planning, implementation, and evaluation procedures used by the staff and parents at the school have been in developing and delivering an effective program for each student. This process involves determining what in the program needs improving and how to make the necessary improvements. In applying this criterion, judge the quality of the improvement process in terms of the effect of planning, implementation, and evaluation activities on the program.

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As a result of collaborative planning among staff members, the principal, and parents, there is a common understanding of what students will learn in school, how they will learn it, and how they will be supported as learners. The roles and responsibilities that students, parents, instructional and support staff members, and the principal will play in the learning process are known. The goals and improvement activities of the program are clearly defined and shared by staff members and students throughout the school. The allocation of resources, including time, and the working relationships of everyone at the school are focused on achieving these goals.

The school plan provides a focus for alignment of curriculum, instructional practices, and evaluation. The coordination of the instructional program across grade levels and the coordination between the regular program and special services for students with special needs are maintained through ongoing planning efforts of the teachers, specialist teachers, and the principal. Good communication, coordination, and mutual support are evident among all staff members, and they are committed to the implementation of their planned program.

Procedures used for ongoing planning and evaluation are known to all staff members and are routinely used. Modifications to the program are made in response to the observed effects of the curriculum and instructional activities on students. The support activities are directly linked to the instructional program and promote student learning.

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- There is a collaborative planning process that involves staff members, the principal, and parents.
  - In School Improvement schools, the school site council serves as the locus for the planning process.
  - In schools serving students with special needs, parents of these students have a voice in the planning and evaluation of these services.
  - There are opportunities for all parents and all staff members to be involved actively in defining schoolwide goals and objectives as participants in the planning process at the school.
  - All parents and staff members have opportunities to evaluate the effectiveness of the planned program and the extent to which the goals and objectives are being attained.
  - Sufficient time is allocated to the planning process.
- There is common understanding throughout the school of what the students will learn, how they will learn it, and how they will be supported as learners.
  - Teachers are in agreement about what students are to learn in each curricular area, and at each grade level.
  - The major instructional strategies that were agreed on during the planning process are being used.
  - Schoolwide policies and practices for homework, discipline, student placement and promotion, and so forth that were agreed on during the planning process are being implemented.
- Each staff member understands the overall intent of the planned program, what his or her individual role and responsibilities are, and how those responsibilities relate to what others are doing or will do.
- All staff members, including those providing services to students with special needs, communicate with one another regularly and work together for program coordination and for mutual support. There is a high level of staff commitment to carrying out the program as planned.
- The procedures (formal and informal) used for planning, ongoing planning, and evaluation are widely known throughout the school. Staff members know:
  - Who is responsible for what
  - What kinds of evaluation data are routinely collected
  - How those data are analyzed, by whom, and how they are used in planning programmatic changes
  - How to use the ongoing planning process to institute programmatic changes